

From Revelation to Revolution: Walking Together in Radical Love

Epistle from the 201st Session of the Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends held via internet June 16-20

Dear Friends,

The pandemic experience has been one of physical separation. Human contact, so essential to our wellbeing, became dangerous and at times deadly. Most of us learned new technologies in order to see each other and sustain our communities and our work together. We have had to make do with virtual contact and experiences – video conferencing for worship and gatherings of all sorts. While we miss the hugs and the tears, we have learned to feel love through our screens and socially distanced visits. Vulnerability, a familiar feeling to many of us, became the norm for all of us.

Unfortunately, the virtual experience was alienating for a few, and they chose to wait until we could meet in person again. We also stopped seeing many of our children and families because they needed to take a break from too much video conferencing for school and work.

The theme of the 201st annual sessions of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting, held virtually June 16-20, 2021, was *From Revelation to Revolution: Walking Together in Radical Love*. What does walking together in radical love mean in this time of pandemic?

From its earliest years, our society has been listening carefully for the voice of God, tenderly discerning where it is pointing us, and trying to faithfully follow those leadings of the Divine. The pandemic has made each part of this difficult and has hindered us in doing the work God has called us to as a body, so this year, we took time to listen to the stories of our individual ministries. A common thread in these stories was how the workings of God's radical love on our hearts has transformed our labors into acts of radical love in the world.

One Friend shared her experience of being called beyond her perceived capabilities in helping an immigrant family when the head of household ran afoul of the law and was incarcerated. She testified to her transformation from an ordinary person with what she thought was an ordinary capacity to love.

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Dear Friends:

I'm writing to thank you for entrusting me with the responsibility of serving as presiding clerk of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting. I'm looking forward to building connections across the yearly meeting over the coming years, but if you don't know me yet, here's a brief introduction.

I live in Cincinnati with my husband, Brad, and our six year-old daughter, Ollie. I've been a Quaker for about twenty years, starting with my first meeting for worship at Community Friends Meeting as a young adult. I also studied at Indiana University during some formative years and grew my faith with Bloomington Friends.

I currently work for Friends General Conference as the coordinator of the Spiritual Deepening Program, a set of resources and online learning opportunities that help Friends and newcomers explore Quaker voices and spiritual practices. Before this, I traveled among Friends as a workshop facilitator for the QuakerQuest program, visiting meetings to talk about nurturing thriving spiritual communities and engaging in outreach. I carry a special concern for helping us transform our meetings into faith communities that are welcoming to *all* who might want to share the gift of Quaker worship.

Rachel

Ernst Stahlhut



Now I'm excited to start wearing a new "Quaker hat" – yearly meeting clerk. I am so grateful that I get to participate in the divine experiment of surrendering to the silence and witnessing truth emerge. Thank you for trusting me with this role.

Some of the ongoing struggles that we will continue to face as a yearly meeting, such as filling spots on committees and worrying about declining participation in our monthly and yearly meetings, reflect the wider social change experience by many Quaker organizations and yearly meetings over the past years and decades. There is a lot we can learn from Friends in North America and around the world. As we look forward to life in a post-pandemic "new normal," I invite us to prayerfully open our hearts and say 'yes' to the opportunities of this moment.

Yours in loving service,
Rachel Ernst Stahlhut

clerk@ovym.org

(Epistle continued from p. 1) As she lived up to the Light she had, more was granted her and she became able to love in a radical way. She felt way opening, granting her the grace and courage to respond.

Another spoke of his years working with incarcerated youth and the joy he found there. By opening himself to the transforming power of radical love, he found himself guided to service he never expected.

A Young Adult Friend told of the transforming effects of service in the Peace Corps, the unexpected blessings received, and how life has unfolded in the time since.

Another Friend serves as a hospice chaplain. He told us that a terminal diagnosis can be the spark for personal transformation. Even when a cure is out of reach, spiritual healing is possible. Moreover, he reminded us, you don't have to be dying to invite wholeness into your life.

The pandemic has exposed rot in our society and radical love is our response. Friends believe that the kingdom of heaven is present here and now. Even our grief can help us to feel the in-breaking of God's grace and can empower us to help build that blessed community. When we open ourselves to divine revelation, we are emboldened to give up the ways of this world and pursue spiritual revolution.

Our sessions took place at the time of the first formal national recognition and celebration of Juneteenth as a holiday commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. In her welcoming, our Presiding Clerk prayed, "May the Divine Light that is in each of us illumine and transform this body as we undertake the work of decolonization and anti-racism." In these sessions we looked deeply at our roles in racial injustice. European American Friends, accustomed to white privilege, found the capacity to begin to look honestly at our biases and at the structural injustices within the Religious Society of Friends here in OVYM. An African American Friend assured us, "Relationships are where it starts. Love and care of each other. We will get there."

Radical love manifests itself differently in each person. Radical love will lead to compassion and compassion fosters radical love. We cannot possess radical love, only let it possess us. When we have opened ourselves to it, that love has guided us to work we would not have thought to choose, serving people who don't look like us, and brought profound joy. Join us in this revolution.

Nuclear Disarmament Action Toolkit

Following up the Nuclear Disarmament Minute from Annual Sessions

You know that nuclear weapons endanger our world. The good news is that you can take action today to help reduce that threat. We can work together to abolish nuclear weapons.

ACTION GOALS: To reduce the chance of nuclear war, the U.S. must:

- *Work toward a **verifiable agreement** among nuclear nations to eliminate nuclear weapons
- *Adopt a "**No First Use**" policy, renouncing the option of being first to use nuclear weapons in a conflict
- *Place some **checks on the power of the U.S. President** to launch nuclear weapons
- ***Remove our nuclear weapons from hair-trigger launch status**
- ***Revoke the plan to enlarge and "modernize" our nuclear arsenal** with new destabilizing weapons
- ***Divert tax dollars from weapons systems** which actually increase our danger and channel them into meeting human needs and climate mitigation, which will actually make us more secure.

ACTION STEPS (Each of these is related to resources listed below)

Spread the word. Many people don't know about this danger, nor what we can do about it. Share what you know. **A quick step:** Post some facts on social media.

You can also: Write paragraphs for the newsletters of organizations you belong to and/or send letters to the editor of local, regional or national newspapers. Use courteous language and build on common ground to clarify the danger and list solutions. Your meeting could help host a community event, perhaps a lecture, panel discussion, vigil, or screening of a film such as *The Day After* or *Dr. Strangelove*. To learn more yourself, in an easily shareable form, see FCNL's May/June 2021 *Washington Newsletter: Engendering Change in U.S. Nuclear Policy*. Follow FCNL's ongoing work on Nuclear Weapons issues.

Work for better U.S. nuclear policy and revised budget priorities.

A quick step: You can make your voice heard quickly and easily by taking FCNL's recommended actions.

You can also: Send personal messages to your U.S. Representative and Senators, politely requesting them to work toward these goals and support relevant legislation. Use courteous language to make one specific request. Staff members tabulate phone calls and emails--they really are counted! When relevant, contact the White House or members of the administration. Letters to the editor build support and momentum. Furthermore, if you embed a legislator's name in your letter, s/he will see it. For a bolder step, you can arrange to visit a legislator and/or member of their staff in person, individually or with a group.

Participate in the movement to divert financial resources from nuclear weapons manufacturing. Now, "defense" makes lots of money for corporations and their lobbyists. When that changes we will see major shifts.

A do-able step: Check out the list of companies investing in nuclear weapons at: <https://www.dontbankonthebomb.com/investors/>. If your bank or credit card company invests in nuclear weapons, you can write a letter explaining why you are moving your account to a different institution.

You can also: Press institutions to which you belong, such as your faith community, pension fund, municipality or even state to divest from nuclear weapons. Guidance and support are available--see the Resources section below.

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Join the nuclear abolition movement. People all over the world want an end to the nuclear threat. A majority of the world's nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in July, 2017. Nations that become party to the treaty prohibit development, production, stockpiling, and use of nuclear weapons on their territory. Over fifty nations having ratified the TPNW, it became international law in January, 2021. The United States has yet to ratify this treaty, but a number of organizations seek to abolish nuclear weapons, and you--and perhaps your Meeting--can join one. The **International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)** won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize and focuses on "mobilizing civil society around the world to support the specific objective of prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons." ICAN's U.S. partner, **NuclearBan.US**, offers the **Treaty Compliance Campaign**, by which individuals, businesses, faith communities, schools, organizations, cities and states can align themselves with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear weapons and the Paris Climate Agreement by undertaking to disconnect and divest, as far as possible, from both fossil fuels and the nuclear weapons industry. **Back from the Brink: The Call to Prevent Nuclear War** is "a national grassroots campaign seeking the abolition of nuclear weapons and fundamental change in U.S. nuclear weapons policy."

Make appropriate financial contributions. Perhaps you don't have time or energy for activism but have financial resources to assist those who do. Consider contributing to one or more of the organizations mentioned in this handout. Your donation need not be huge; many organizations favor a small recurring monthly donation that they can plan on, and this may fit well into your budget. Some contributions may be tax deductible, some may not, but all can help with the work.

RESOURCES

Background Information:

FCNL: <https://tinyurl.com/FCNL-nuclear>.

Arms Control Association: <https://www.armscontrol.org/>

Union of Concerned Scientists: <https://www.ucsusa.org/>.

The Doomsday Machine by Daniel Ellsberg

The Button by William J. Perry

Contacting policymakers

Register at FCNL's Action Center: <https://fcnl.quorum.us/>

U.S. Representative: <https://www.house.gov/htbin/findrep>

U.S. Senators: <https://www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm>

U.S. President: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>

Call the Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121

Diverting financial resources

Watch a comprehensive webinar at: <https://treatyawareness.us/pressuring-the-nuclear-weapons-profiteers/>

<https://www.dontbankonthebomb.com/investors/>

<https://www.asyousow.org/>

Joining an abolition campaign

International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons: <https://www.icanw.org/>

NuclearBan.US: <http://www.nuclearban.us/about/>

Treaty Compliance Campaign: <https://treatyawareness.us/>

Back from the Brink: <https://preventnuclearwar.org/>

If you think you are too small to make a difference, you haven't spent a night with a mosquito. --African proverb

Submitted by Peggy Squires

Mark Your Calendars for Joint Quarterly Meeting

Joint Quarterly meeting is usually a highly anticipated event for Friends in OVYM. For many of us we have wonderful memories of walks in the full color foliage of the woods at Happy Hollow Campgrounds, great conversations over wonderful meals and a rousing talent show on Saturday night. This year we had hoped to erase the disappointment from 2020 when we were forced to cancel our reservation at Happy Hollow. Unfortunately, the strong rise of COVID-19 cases in our area of the country and the likelihood that cases will rise further over the next few months has led us to conclude that it would be imprudent to plan to resume the usual programming for Joint Quarter in 2021. Consequently we are starting to plan for a mostly on-line Joint Quarter meeting for the weekend of either October 16-17th or October 23-24. Please pencil this into your calendar so you will set aside the time to join in the education, worship and fun we are planning. Should you be interested in helping with the planning please let us know. We would love to have your energy and creativity to help plan this event.

Submitted by Peter Hardy (clerk, Miami Quarter) & Christine Carver (clerk, Whitewater Quarter)

Welcome to our new OVYM Administrative Assistant

We are pleased to announce that Susan Lee Barton will serve as our administrative assistant. She can be reached at admin@ovym.org. She replaces Deborah Jordan, who has faithfully fulfilled this role for 14 years. Thanks to both of you!

QUAKER HISTORY IN OUR REGION

Clark County village fostered pre-Civil War radicalism

By Tom Stafford

Springfield News-Sun Feb 26, 2012

Quakers in Selma pushed for abolition and equal rights for women.

In 1965, Selma, Ala., was a hotbed of Civil Rights activity — the place where protesters led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. twice challenged white supremacy with peaceful marches that turned bloody when participants fell under attack.

In the run-up to the Civil War, the Clark County village of Selma, Ohio, was a national flash-point. The epicenter in this Selma was not the Edmund Pettis Bridge, but the Green Plain Hicksite Quaker Meeting, which was located on what's now a small patch of weedy ground in a farm field off Ohio 42.

There was no violence in this Selma, but "it was probably about as radical a group of anti-slavery activists as you would have found anywhere in the United States at the time," said Thomas Hamm, professor of history and director of Special Collections at Quaker-affiliated Earlham College in Richmond, Ind.

"Believe it or not," Hamm added, "little Selma would have had a national or international reputation."

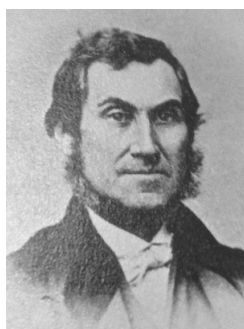
What made Selma, Ohio, unique?

"A lot of the radicalism of the 19th century came out of the countryside," Hamm said. "Quakers had a longstanding position against slavery," Hamm said. "Something that's interesting is that if you look at the patterns of settlements of free African-Americans in Indiana and Ohio before the Civil War, they're disproportionately close to Quaker communities."

The same pattern helped to establish the routes of the Underground Railroad, through which many escaped slaves traveled north to freedom in Canada. In his 1951 "The Mysteries of the Ohio Underground Railroad," groundbreaking researcher Wilbur H. Siebert mentions the Selma Quakers.

"At Selma, some of the (travelers) were secreted in the black kilns of Thomas Miller. Others took refuge with: Thomas Barton and wife, Joseph A. Dugdale, Samuel C. Howell, Isaac Newcomb, William Thorne and wife, Samuel Wilkson and Richard Wright." "At length, the Quakers of Selma and its environs hired Priestly Thomas, an ardent Negro conductor, to make the frequent runs necessary," Siebert writes. And at present, many of the names mentioned are carved on tombstones in three Quaker cemeteries near Selma.

Radicalism causes rifts



Among the names of Green Plain Meeting members, Dugdale's was most widely known. Born near Philadelphia in 1810, he joined Green Plain Meeting in 1835, the decade after supporters of Elias Hicks broke off from traditional Quakers over Hicks' ministry, which included an emphasis on the believer's direct experience of God rather than scriptural dictates.

The building in which the orthodox Quakers met still stands on Selma Pike in Selma, its cemetery behind a stand of trees from which sap buckets for syrup hang. The break-off Hicksite meetinghouse also stands on South Charleston-Clifton Road, its two front doors leading to the segregated sections in which men and women worshipped. In 1842, Dugdale and his more radical believers broke off from that Meeting and built yet another meetinghouse perhaps half a mile to the west on a ridge in a field. Although the building is gone, the boundaries of its cemetery are marked by a weedy patch tractors avoid.

Like radicals of all time, Dugdale railed not only against what he saw as moral wrongs in society, but also those in positions of moral authority who failed to wage war against those wrongs. In an 1850 pamphlet of his "Extemporaneous Discourses," he was quoted as saying: "We find when the subject of American slavery with its untold horrors is sought to be investigated, and its abominations exposed, those clothed with authority, who stand as priests and ministers, are ever ready to close the doors of their meeting-houses and their steeple-houses" to the truth.

And Dugdale's radicalism went beyond slavery.

"We find ... that the rights of woman are denied her; we find that the door of the pulpit is closed against her; we find that those standing high in the Church are unwilling that posts of honor and usefulness should be opened to her in other departments of life." In a radical tone some will associate with 1960s, he railed, "Indeed, I know of no subject of especial interest to the human race, upon with those standing high in authority ... are willing to speak as they ought."

In pamphlet form, his words made their way throughout the North as the sectional crisis grew. Dugdale's activism was endorsed by national abolitionist leader William Lloyd Garrison and his ability to bring others to the cause reported in the *National Anti-Slavery Review*.

Green Plain Friends threaten revolt

Although Dugdale's wide influence clearly sprung from personal qualities and his powers of speech, the pattern of his influence paralleled that of a Philadelphia-area Quaker who moved to Ohio and made his mark in industry: Jeremiah Warder. Warder and his sons, particularly Benjamin, used their influence back East as leverage to get more from the family's considerable success in manufacturing agricultural implements in 19th century Springfield. And as Warder would help Springfield export reapers all over the nation and world, Dugdale and his fellow Quakers would export their radical abolitionism.

The passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which required people in the North to cooperate with the capture of escaped slaves, brought the rift between Northern radicals and national authority to a head. Writes Siebert, "The Green Plain Yearly Meeting of Friends ... condemned the (measure) absolutely, declaring that they would aid fugitive Negroes as they had done in the past "in defiance of all the governments on earth."

While radicals in the South were talking about leaving the Union if they could not retain slavery, those in Green Plain were threatening to revolt if required to support it.

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(Continued from p. 4) “If it be really a constitutional obligation,” they said, “that all who live under the government shall be kidnappers and slave catchers for Southern tyrants, WE GO FOR REVOLUTION, the means to be keeping with God’s will.” So radical was the Green Plain congregation in the pursuit of what they saw was God’s will to end slavery, said Hamm, “they were willing to dissolve the union ... and (see) the United States break up, if it had meant the end of slavery.”

They were, in that way, at eventual cross purposes with President Abraham Lincoln. It was to neither Lincoln nor the nation that Green Plain Meeting had pledged its allegiance. It was to God.

Submitted by Tim Morand

Photo credit: Swarthmore College

Laura Haviland and the Underground Railroad

Submitted by Susan Gerke

On a recent trip to Paducah Kentucky, I picked up an excellent book called “A Tour on the Underground Railroad along the Ohio River”. It is by Nancy Stearns Theiss (The History Press, 2020). It had interesting places to visit and also stories connected to it. I thought others might be interested in it because it is in the OVYM area. There are suggestions of places to visit, and lots of background of places we all know. I found one Quaker woman I had never heard about before particularly interesting. Why have I never heard of her and her compatriots before? I’d like to share her story with you, quoted below with permission from the publisher.

LAURA HAVILAND (1808-1898)

Laura Smith Haviland was raised in Lockport, New York, by parents who were devout Quakers and condemned slavery. She married Charles Haviland in 1825, and they had eight children. The Havilands moved to Michigan, and Laura, with other members of the community, formed the first anti-slavery organization in Michigan, the Logan Female Anti-Slavery Society, in 1832.

Laura and her husband began the Raisin Institute, which was designed for indigent children, regardless of race, creed or sex. They eventually expanded the school along the traditions of an elementary and high school, hiring a graduate from Oberlin College as the principal. Laura’s husband and one of their children died from an epidemic, and two years later, she lost another child. She was forced to close the Raisin Institute for lack of funds in 1849, but organized the Refugee Home Society, working with her close friend Henry Bibb, as well as George deBaptiste. Laura Haviland secured funds a few years later and reopened the Raisin Institute by 1856.

She traveled and taught in schools for black children in Cincinnati and Toledo. Laura and her husband had established their home as a stop for refugee slaves on the Underground Railroad. After her husband’s death, Haviland began crossing into slave states like Kentucky, Arkansas and Tennessee, risking her own life as a conductor, against the advice of friends, such as Levi and Catherine Coffin who thought it was too dangerous. One example is the case of John White.

John White had escaped from the Petersburg area in Kentucky and crossed the river to Rising Sun, Indiana, when he learned he was about to be sold south, which would separate him from his wife and children, who were held in bondage by another man. He stayed at the Raisin Institute where he met Laura Haviland. He appealed to Haviland to help him with the escape of his wife and children. Disguising herself, Haviland crossed the river into Kentucky with a group of three black women from Rising Sun to collect blackberries. Laura contacted John’s wife to set the plan for escape.

At the appointed time, John White lead his family to a skiff bound for Rising Sun, but the Ohio River was swift and carried their small boat down river from where a wagon was set to meet them. Bounty hunters pursued the group and captured his wife and children, but John got away... [Due to the risks involved, he was unable to aid his family and] stayed in Canada and never saw his wife and children again.

There were many other instances when Haviland helped aid and abet fugitives, sometimes in disguise. In 1865, during the Civil War, General Oliver Howard named Haviland as inspector of hospitals for the newly organized Freeman’s bureau. For the next two years, Haviland traveled through Kansas, Tennessee, Arkansas and other areas, delivering supplies, checking on the conditions of Freedman’s and indigent whites, organizing schools and refugee camps and delivering lectures. She would carry “instrument of torture” used on slaves to describe the horrible conditions of slavery. She also helped organize the Women’s Christian Temperance union in Michigan and worked on causes of suffrage for women. Haviland died in Michigan and is buried beside her husband. The town of Haviland, Kansas, was named in her honor because she had done a lot of refugee work there, and a statue of Laura Haviland stands at the Lewancee County Historical Museum in Adrian, Michigan.

Photo credit: Atlas Obscura



News from Monthly Meetings

Bloomington

Transitions seems an appropriate theme for the life of the Bloomington Friends Meeting this summer. We have successfully moved to hybrid Meeting for Worship on First Day with about an even split between the live and Zoom attenders. We've experimented with various equipment to optimize the audio-visual quality of the experience. Our community has said some goodbyes to some attenders as they graduate and move on as well as youth heading off to college away from home. Some of the long-distance Zoom attenders during the last year are now rejoining their home meetings for worship. We were sad to lose Davida Ericson, our 104-year old member in June, but held 2 memorial meetings this summer for the dear Friends who have recently passed away. However we welcomed Jason Page into membership who joined his wife Amanda after a few months. Most recently we were blessed by the birth of a new daughter to a long-distance member. The wheel of life keeps turning.

Submitted by Christine Carver

Campus Friends Meeting

We are enriched by the presence of two new attenders who began worshipping with us this summer. At our May meeting for business, Friends approved naming Campus Friends Meeting as a "Welcoming and Inclusive Meeting" for worship. We have started the process which will hopefully result in the addition of this wording to the sign in front of the meetinghouse on the Wilmington College Campus. The full minute has been added to the Campus Friends Meeting brochure which necessitated a much needed update, and an addition to our website.

COVID-19 ended visitation with our Friends in the local retirement community until July of this year when we were once again allowed to hold meeting for worship on alternating Tuesday evenings. However, due to a high rate of infection in Clinton County the door closed once again after four weeks leaving us to find new ways to worship with members who are unable to attend on Sunday morning.

We wrote memorial minutes for Robert (Bob) Powell and James Ramsey, and remembered these dear Friends at the Memorial Meeting during the Annual Sessions of Wilmington Yearly Meeting in July. Their ministry enriched our fellowship and gathered worship for many years.

As fall approaches, we look forward to the return of students and faculty to Wilmington College.

Submitted by Patricia Thomas

Clear Creek

Currently, Clear Creek Meeting has been holding Meeting for Worship in a hybrid format, with some members meeting in person at Stout Meetinghouse, and others joining remotely via Zoom. Earlham now requires masks in all college buildings. In-person participants have been meeting mostly outdoors during these warm months, but sometimes inside, depending upon weather.

Ministry and Oversight has undertaken a consideration of the use of technology in the Meeting, especially with regard to the current practice of hybrid meetings. The committee is considering what the best practice might be in the immediate future and also going forward following the pandemic. Some very thought provoking queries have emerged from the discussion thus far.

The Anti-Racism group is continuing their study and work. The Book Group has been reading and discussing regularly.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee plans to resume programming in September.

The Adult Religious Education Committee is developing a Clear Creek Calendar with dates of personal and spiritual importance to individuals and to the community.

Clear Creek began a new initiative in June to encourage people to get to know each other better, called "Friendly Pairs." Planned one-on-one visits allow Friends to become acquainted with each other at a deeper level than that possible in brief chats after Meeting. Those who have been participating in June and July have reported that it is both enjoyable and rewarding.

Some Friends gathered to view the Perseids meteor shower in August in Clara Whitman-Parrett's field. Clara has some of the darkest skies to be found in Wayne County, IN, which are ideal for stargazing.

Also in August, several Friends from Clear Creek Meeting enjoyed the Richmond Young Friends cookout at First Friends Meeting.

Submitted by Karen Bays-Winslow

Community

We send greetings to all our Friends in our Yearly Meeting. We miss you all, and we missed each other too, when we could not meet in person. The meeting house re-opened June 6th, and we have been having hybrid meetings since then. That works well as we have several Friends who regularly join us remotely. Many committee meetings and events are now there.

We had a going away celebration for Paul Buckley and his wife Peggy, who have moved to Richmond, IN. We will miss them both as they were very active in our community. They will be a blessing to their new meeting!

Our caretakers, John and Elizabeth, have been staying at their farm occasionally this summer. Many of us have overflowing garden produce to share! Many elder members have had significant birthdays, especially Evie Hoffman who turned 90! As many as ten children have participated in fun activities together. Wilhelmina Branson will serve on OVYM Nominating Committee.

We have continued our ministries. With the Sanctuary Coalition, we are helping to support a family from Ghana. For almost 10 years, our FCNL lobby group has been working to have the Authorization for the Use of Military Force repealed. And it finally is repealed! We bring a monthly meal to Tender Mercies, a residence for formerly homeless people who have mental illnesses. Recently, we have resumed serving the meal and interacting with the residents.

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(Community news, continued) Many of us follow individual leadings. E.g., Deborah Jordan and Bill Cahallan are active with several environmental organizations, and Paulette Meier continues her music ministry.

September is a busy month. We are pleased to have Sarah Hoffmann and John Fix be married under the care of our meeting. We wish them every blessing. Religious Education for both children and adults will start in September. Ken Jacobsen will be facilitating a Day of Renewal on September 18.

We had a thought-provoking discussion group on Kendi's book, *How to be an Anti-racist*. It led one member to intervene with a racist employee whom she supervised. This led to the entire agency enacting a policy on racism. Our discussion led to action, and we hope will all be inspired to take a stand and act.

Submitted by Susan Gerke

Dayton

Dayton Friends Meeting met a few milestones recently. We have re-started singing at the Meetinghouse and shaking hands again after meeting! Our meeting is growing- both on Zoom and in-person- with an average of 17 attending in-person each week. We were pleased to welcome Trent Applegate as a new member followed by a potluck celebration. Trent (who lives in Indiana) will attend via Zoom when he is not visiting family locally. Carol Lewis is also well on her way to becoming a member, having already met with a clearness committee. Dayton Friends also welcomed Andrew Joseph Saco, newborn of Julie Saco!

Sue Brezine moved recently to a nursing facility and we continue to hold her in the light. We were saddened to hear of former member David Wood's passing, as well as the grandfather of Phil Henry. Both of these families are in our prayers.

Dayton Friends have been actively trying to reunite Felix Kazonkiza (a Friend from Burundi) with his family. Felix had the opportunity to immigrate to the U.S., but complications prevented his wife and children from coming with him.

The MEEC (Marianist Environmental Education Center) responded to Dayton Friends request for mentorship on installing a pollinator garden and an ad hoc committee will be set up to discuss this.

Our meeting met with many other meetings from western Ohio at Fort Ancient Park for worship and a potluck afterwards in July. Sadly, this annual event may have come to an end because of the shrinking of so many of the participating meetings.

Submitted by Scott Hadley

Eastern Hills

For a few weeks this summer, we resumed singing during meeting for worship, arranged our chairs in a closer circle, and removed our masks (after singing). We also brought meeting to worship to an isolated Friend once a month for a few sessions until she requested the practice be suspended. Then with the resurgence of COVID-19 and concerns regarding the delta variant, we again donned our masks and separated our households. We are grateful for the expertise of our *ad hoc* committee on COVID safety. In addition to safety concerns and tech glitches with our hybrid worship, the pandemic has impacted the quality of our worship. Disruptions including anxiety and the division of our community between "Zoomers and roomers" challenge our ability to center and connect to Divine Spirit. Nonetheless, on a Sunday in August, we were favored with a series of linked messages, culminating in a reflection on the bouquet placed in the center of our circle. The flowers are imperfect, rejects from the floral trade with a few leftovers from last week's homegrown arrangement. A Friend noted that our meeting is like this bouquet, imperfect beings that God has selected and arranged; together our spirits make an awesome combination. Sadly, our arrangement is missing several people who are uncomfortable with Zoom and with in-person gatherings, including some with grave health concerns.

Submitted by Martha Viehmann



Lafayette

Things in Lafayette have been very quiet. We decided to keep our house and have tenants in our house again, but the new tenants have been selected very judiciously so that we can avoid the troubles previous renters had given us. Work refurbishing the house continues; the biggest job has been a new roof.

Like many other meetings dealing with COVID, when the weather was good, we met in the back yard, when the weather was bad we were having Zoom meetings for Worship. Once everyone was vaccinated, we happily returned to meeting in the house. Alas, thanks to COVID Delta, we are back in masks and out of doors. Pre-meeting singalongs in masks and distanced are less fun than they ought to be. The kids mask up and meet in the house.

Our community work has mostly been as part of Lafayette Urban Ministry's (LUM) programs. We help provide meals for the shelter, and staff the food bank. Friends are still contributing their work as individuals, helping with tax preparation and serving on the Board of Directors. We did come together via email to consider LUM's new board structure and new logo. We feel that the new board structure snubs the contribution made by small congregations like our own: the widow's mite ought to entitle her to vote. We also feel that the new logo does not represent LUM's purpose. Even though the consulting firm was paid with a donation, we are sorry that any serious money was spent on a design that looks like the line drawing of the Seattle skyline used for the TV series *Frasier*.

Our study meeting has been revived and we recently read and discussed Te-Nehisi Coates' book, *Between the World and Me*. It was thought provoking, but one could get the gist of it from the first couple of chapters.

Lafayette Friends Meeting is on its usual summer hiatus, which means that we are not having Meetings for Business until fall. We hope that you all have a healthy, Friendly summer.

Submitted by Michele Tomarelli

Lexington

Our Testimonies and Antiracism Work

A recent adult education discussion at Lexington Friends Meeting focused on looking at the relationship between our antiracism work and the Quaker testimonies. We reviewed the testimonies through a list of specific actions toward which each testimony leads. We also reviewed a *Quaker Speak* video, "White Quakers Confronting White Privilege," <https://tinyurl.com/QSpeakPrivilege>. Then we engaged in worship sharing around the query, 'How does antiracism work help us to live out our testimonies as Quakers, both in LFM and the wider communities?'

Here are some of the comments and reflections that were shared:

In antiracism work we come face to face with the pain that people of color have suffered. This is heartbreaking, but the work can be joyful.

The discomfort of antiracism work is the price of growth. If the discomfort is not overwhelming, it can be an impetus for expanding our hearts into something even more beautiful.

It is important to consider how what we are doing impacts people of color. The testimonies are beautiful, but the work is not easy.

Maintaining one's integrity is difficult when you are told you are lesser than. It is disheartening that Americans are again struggling for voting rights. Antiracism work is founded in the spirit. Jesus helped the poor and oppressed.

In preparing for this discussion and reviewing the testimonies, I was challenged by stewardship. How do we share our resources with people of color? Do we support sharing our vaccines with developing countries? Do we share our meetinghouse with people of color? One of our resources is our time. How am I a good steward?

Religious institutions are a big part of how we are taught to treat others, which in turn influences the other institutions we build. Religion is a big part of why we have the problem we are talking about today. I suggest we have regular meetings with other congregations of people of color and reach out to other groups. Interfaith learning. Failure to do that is just staying in our sewing circle.

Most white people don't see themselves as racist, but implicit racism comes out in our biases. Each of us needs to see how am I fitting in here and contributing to a racist outlook. There has been some tension over some of the antiracism work that has been done. How are we going to address that?

As I reflect on my life, I realize that African American people have been crucial to my spiritual life. It is very important that I be open to receiving those gifts.

We must do everything we can to solve the intolerance and distrust we feel toward each other. It begins with being empathetic toward other people.

I have come to see my antiracism work as a lifestyle rather than a project in which I engage for some period of time.

I am learning about the phenomenon of moral injury. White supremacy is a moral injury. Whites thinking they are superior is an injury to the truth.

Within this meeting I see a large avoidance of ownership of white privilege. This is a major problem.

These reflections on our personal and collective work on white privilege provide openings for further work in our meeting and beyond.

Submitted by Betsy Neale

Miami

Miami Monthly Meeting met over zoom during the pandemic. We have resumed some in-person Meetings, starting on Easter, when a laptop positioned on the clerk's table drew in Friends who were far away.

Friends who are far away (I was tempted to say "scattered Friends", but that might carry the wrong implication) have attended from all over the country this year. Often half of those present worshipped with us from other states--Milton Cook in Florida, Tom Nowel in Cleveland, Ginny Wilson in Massachusetts, just to name a few. Some Friends did not feel comfortable meeting remotely. It was a great relief and joy for all of us when we were able to gather at the Meetinghouse again. But we decided to continue online Meetings, at least part of the time, because we treasure the participation of distant Friends.

The pandemic brings chronic concerns into more acute focus. One of them is that our membership is aging. We have less capacity to do physical tasks associated with a large and ancient Meetinghouse. We hire out jobs such as mowing, and think wistfully of days when Friends could hold a working bee to whitewash the Meetinghouse, or host Yearly Meeting with food donated by all the farmers. Discernment on that one is a work in progress.

First Day School did not meet during the pandemic. We plan to resume reading and discussion of Pendle Hill pamphlets soon.

Our annual Meeting at Fort Ancient was officially cancelled due to rain this year, although 12 of us from different meetings wound up in the shelter house in silent worship. We had a gathered meeting in harmony with the steady soothing sound of rain and wind. Afterwards Friends shared updates about their meetings over the past year and some broke bread together.

This summer has brought the delight of new babies among us. Will and Chelsea Nowel welcomed twins Fiona and Michael, five weeks premature but holding their own. Proud grandparents Tom and Lynne Nowel flew to Florida to help out. Kaitlyn Morrison, who attends Miami Monthly Meeting when she can, gave birth to a baby boy.

Now that we are able to hold Meeting with doors wide open, we would certainly welcome any of you to worship with us. You can listen to the old clock marking time, as it has done for so many years. It went dormant while we met via zoom, but started right up again on Easter.

Submitted by Gretchen Stone

North Meadow

We have resumed in-person meetings and stopped Zoom meetings. We are meeting outside whenever that is possible, which has been most of the time lately. We have resumed asking people to mask, both indoors and out, due to the Delta variant of COVID. It is great to see people in person and have a chance to talk one on one afterwards! Additionally, our collaboration with Iglesia Amigos is going forward. They have a grant to refurbish parts of the first floor for fellowship meetings, and we have cleaned house, and donated furniture. We look forward to the new look with painting, new rugs and new furniture. We have put off returning to other joint gatherings due to COVID for now. We all enjoy sitting in the garden for meeting, which we had not done pre-COVID.

Submitted by Jane Rapinchuk

Oxford



We have enjoyed a sense of deep connection in our hybrid meetings for worship. Steve Angell gave a Second Hour presentation on Sojourner Truth & Sarah Mapps Douglass. Some of us attended the Fort Ancient worship and were grateful to worship with the gathered Friends.

We are active participants in the Interfaith Center where we meet. Andy Garrison was on a panel for a prayer vigil in response to acts of hatred toward Jewish, Muslim and Sikh people. We also planted flowers in the building's garden (see photo left). We have begun forging a connection with the new Program Director for the Center.

We have begun a practice on every 5th First Day of reviewing current FCNL calls to action, led by Jamie Young. An outcome was a "Letter to the Editor" urging recall of the Authorizations for Use of Military Force that were passed in the early 2000s in response to the September 11 attacks. We are considering steps to take to follow up the minute from Annual Sessions on nuclear disarmament.

Submitted by Cecilia Shore

Yellow Springs

Yellow Springs Friends held a gathering for the 90th Anniversary of Rockford in June (see photo). Masks, music and social distancing plus good weather made this a pleasant event.

The meeting has found unity with the intent to purchase Rockford Chapel. We will keep f/Friends informed as events unfold.

We began worshipping together in person at the end of July and continue to do so, now requiring masks for all older than 3. Doors and windows open, Friends sit in expectant waiting in the larger social room, followed by casual conversations at a safe distance, often outside the meetinghouse under a canopy donated for use by a member for the second year.

Other groups have been using the canopy also, most noticeably local AA groups. Friends are temporarily replacing potlucks with bimonthly lunches and dinners, also under the canopy.

We were happy to have members who are restricted to Friends Care Center able to meet face to face.

We have not abandoned our First Day Zoom meeting, which still meet at 11 am. We had our first hybrid meeting for worship in August, with two sitting in Rockford Chapel and about 14 on Zoom. This happened as an in person meeting went on in the larger social room.

Since we do not have a phone line or internet in the meetinghouse, we connected using a hotspot device checked out from the local library, along with a loaned laptop and no extra camera or audio equipment. This went well enough that we're ready to try a hybrid Called Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business later this month. We anticipate having internet wiring and the appropriate equipment within the next two months. We're learning as we go.

Submitted by Annie Blanchard



Friends World Committee for Consultation

Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas office is experiencing changes. Robin Mohr, the Executive Secretary, has returned from a sabbatical break. A new Operations Manager, Gil George, will be working from his home office in Oregon. David Ruiz Trejo of Monterrey, Mexico is managing the technical and social operations of the FWCC Online Orientation program to help us complete the transition to a fully virtual training program for Representatives. This six-month, part-time position was made possible by a grant from the Thomas H. & Mary Williams Shoemaker Fund.

The World Office is also undergoing transition. The new General Secretary, Tom Gee, will assume the position in January 2022. He replaces Gretchen Castle, who has accepted the position of Dean of the Earlham School of Religion.

Be sure to think ahead about planning an activity to celebrate World Quaker Day on Sunday, October 3rd. This year's theme is "Resilience and Hope: Drawing strength from our Quaker faith." More information is available at www.worldquakerday.org.

Submitted by Foote Lund



American Friends Service Committee

Making New Worlds: Pursuing Peace with Justice - AFSC's 2021 Corporation program. The American Friends Service Committee invited all Quakers to join us for online events which took place from April 11-15, 2021. What does it mean to dismantle systems to create justice? What is the Quaker historical perspective on working for liberation, and what is the vision of contemporary Quaker organizers? How is AFSC working to end injustice and the institutions that perpetuate it—and create alternatives based on care and a solidarity economy? In these workshops and plenary address, we explored approaches to working toward peace with justice and ways that AFSC and Quakers are striving to build new world. Watch the recordings and find supporting resources at <https://www.afsc.org/corpprogram>.

Source: AFSC website

Under the Mask. Visit our new site which tracks abuses of power by governments around the world in the context of the pandemic. Learn more at <https://underthemask.afsc.org/>

Source: AFSC website

Tools for young people to fund communities, defund the police. Debbie Southorn of AFSC shares that Chicago youth organizers from #NoCopAcademy recently dropped this incredible toolkit full of reflections, how-to's, ideas, worksheets and more. <https://nocopacademy.com/get-involved/>

Source: Email from John Krieg

Westheimer Peace Symposium Quaker Heritage Center

...the 31st annual Westheimer Peace Symposium will delve into the relationship between nonviolence and social change through a day-long dialogue Oct. 5 at Wilmington College.

The event, which is expected to be in-person on campus, is titled "Build a Just World: A Toolbox for Nonviolent Social Change." George Lakey, a pioneering Quaker sociologist and peace activist and, Amaha Sellassie, a Dayton-area sociologist and social justice activist, will present the day's sessions....

...the Meriam R. Hare Quaker Heritage Center at WC will present a gallery exhibit highlighting the life testimony to nonviolence, peace and social justice embodied by the late Professor Emeritus Larry Gara. The exhibit opens Sept. 21.

Source: Wilmington College website

Right Sharing of World Resources

The Third Quarter Newsletter <https://tinyurl.com/RSWRCOVID> includes an article about how field representatives are helping women's groups cope with the pandemic and prepare for emergencies. "Pauline Ayodi is a field representative in Kenya – during the pandemic she noticed that disaster preparedness is vital to women's ongoing success."

Support RSWR by sending used stamps. ...please mail them to: Stamps for Right Sharing, c/o Indianapolis First Friends, 3030 Kessler Blvd. East Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46220 If you require an acknowledgment that your stamps have been received, include a name and an email address or phone number in your package. It may take us a few weeks to reply.

Source: Second Quarter Newsletter

Friends General Conference

Watch Recordings from the 2021 FGC Gathering. If you missed the Gathering this year or want to revisit these inspiring presentations now you can watch and share them from FGC's YouTube page! See this year's thought-provoking Bible Half Hour series with Benigno Sánchez-Eppler (NEYM), and powerful plenary presentations from Lisa Graustein (NEYM), Clinton Pettus (BYM), and Tara Houska (Honor the Earth, Water Protector, Stop Line 3). Recordings can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/FGC2021videos>

Openings for virtual spiritual growth. A wide variety of online worship and worship sharing opportunities are available, some of which are focused on specific concerns such as racism and earthcare. This page also links to Spiritual Deepening e-retreats on topics such as: *My Grandmother's Hands* book discussion, Silence and Light for Quaker newcomers, and Aging, Death and Dying. <https://tinyurl.com/FGCOnlineWorship>

2020 Impact Report: Responding Faithfully. Our 2020 Impact Report is more than a reflection of our work last year - it is a record of a community responding to difficult times together. <https://tinyurl.com/FGC2020impact>

Source: Vital Friends newsletters, June/July, August.

Friends Committee on National Legislation

More than 500 young adult advocates gathered online March 20-22, 2021 for FCNL's Spring Lobby Weekend where they learned how to lobby and heard from Sen. Cory Booker (NJ) and Rep. Karen Bass (CA-37) about the crisis of police violence. They visited more than 140 congressional offices by phone and video with the policy ask: pass the meaningful reforms included in the Justice in Policing Act (H.R. 1280). The next Spring Lobby Weekend will be held March 12-15, 2022.

The 2021 Annual Meeting and Quaker Public Policy Institute will be held entirely virtually Nov 17-21, 2021. After discernment, the planning committee recognized that it would take time to return to in-person or even hybrid gatherings that provide a full and equitable experience for all participants. Registration and details are available at the FCNL website: <https://www.fcnl.org/events/annualmeeting2021>

Submitted by Jamie Young

At the Un-National Monument along the Canadian Border

By William Stafford

This is the field where the battle did not happen,
where the unknown soldier did not die.

This is the field where grass joined hands,
where no monument stands,
and the only heroic thing is the sky.

Birds fly here without any sound,
unfolding their wings across the open.
No people killed—or were killed—on this ground
hallowed by neglect and an air so tame
that people celebrate it by forgetting its name.



What Exists Is Possible: Stories from Conflict Resolution Professionals

By Julian Portilla <https://tinyurl.com/what-exists>

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

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ovym.quaker.org

The Quaker Quill is published three times a year by Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. The first annual issue is published September 15, so the submission deadline will be August 15. The second issue will come out February 15, so the submission deadline will be January 15. The third issue will come out June 1, so the submission deadline will be May 1.

Contact: quakerquill@gmail.com
Cecilia Shore, editor.

Thanks to Susan Lee Barton for proofreading.

Printed on 100% recycled paper.

But in the central innermost region of our minds there shines one pure ray of direct Light from the very Throne of God; one ray which belongs to each one individually; which is for that one supreme and apart; the ray which shining from the heavenward side of conscience, and so enlightening and purifying it, must of necessity dominate the whole being. Caroline Stephen, 1834-1909

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